

**Amendments To The Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A steel prepared by casting liquid steel deoxidized with Al, including one or more rare-earth metals (REMs) selected from the group of Ce, La, Pr and Nd, [[is]] characterized by,

the steel containing alumina clusters and consisting essentially of C of 0.0005 to 1.5 mass%, Si of 0.005 to 1.2 mass%, Mn of 0.05 to 3.0 mass%, P of 0.001 to 0.1 mass%, S of 0.0001 to 0.05 mass%, Al of 0.005 to 1.5 mass%, and total oxygen T.O. of less than 80 ppm, with the remainder iron and unavoidable impurities,

where the alumina clusters are oxide-based inclusions consisting essentially of alumina and REM-oxide, the inclusions containing Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> of not less than 78.6 mass% and REM-oxide of not less than 0.5 mass% and not more than 15 mass%,

where the mass ratio of total REM to total oxygen (~~T.O.~~), i.e. REM/T.O. [[,]] is not less than 0.05 and not more than 0.5,

where total REM is not less than 0.1 ppm and less than 10 ppm and dissolved REM is less than 1 ppm.

2-4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) The steel containing alumina clusters described in claim 1, in which said steel further contains one or more of Cu of 0.1 to 1.5 mass%, Ni of 0.1 to 10.0 mass%, Cr of 0.1 to 10.0 mass% and Mo of 0.05 to 1.5 mass%.

6. (Previously Presented) The steel containing alumina clusters described in claim 1, in which said steel further contains one or more of Nb of 0.005 to 0.1 mass%, V of 0.005 to 0.3 mass% and Ti of 0.001 to 0.25 mass%.

7. (Previously Presented) The steel containing alumina clusters described in claim 1, in which said steel further contains B of 0.0005 to 0.005 mass%.

8. (Previously Presented) The steel containing alumina clusters described in claim 1, in which the maximum diameter of alumina clusters obtained by applying slime extraction to said steel is less than 100  $\mu\text{m}$ .

9. (Previously Presented) The steel containing alumina clusters described in claim 8, in which the number of alumina clusters not smaller than 20  $\mu\text{m}$  is not more than 2/kg.